

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

What is claimed:

1(Currently Amended). A piston ring, having a base member with a contact surface provided with a contact surface profile as well as an upper and a lower side surface, in which only a portion of [at least] said contact surface is supplied with a vapor deposition coating of CrN defining an outer surface of said CrN coating that is unground and in its as-applied surface condition, in combination with an adjacent remaining portion of said contact surface profile fabricated of cross member portion of said base member material having an outer surface at the same level as said CrN outer surface and which has a ground surface finish and [, in such a way that a partial area of said contact surface is supplied with a removable cover, so that after fabrication of the vapor deposition coating and removal of the cover] an essentially sharp-edged contact surface edge [[is]] formed between said contact surface of said cross member portion and at least one of said side surfaces.

2(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said contact surface profile includes [[a]] said cross member portion on which an associated [[said]] removable cover is provided.

3(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim [[1]] 2 wherein said contact surface profile includes a partially conical as well as an adjacent cylindrically shaped area, in which said area said removable cover is provided.

4(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said base member includes a groove in which said CrN coating is disposed contact surface profile includes at least one groove, in which at least cross member is provided having said removable cover.

5(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim [[1]] 2 wherein said removable cover is formed as a single piece out of the base material.

6(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim [[1]] 2 wherein said removable cover comprises bands or strips.

7(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said vapor deposition coating of CrN comprises a PVD or CVD coating in thicknesses between 5 μm and 70 μm .

8(Previously Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein at least one of said sides of the ring is supplied with a galvanized layer.

9(Currently Amended). A piston ring, according to claim [[1]] 8 wherein said galvanized layer is chrome based.

10(Previously Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said base material comprises steel or cast iron.

11(Canceled).

12(Previously Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said contact surface profile is supplied with at least one undercut defining an oil reservoir between a cross member and said vapor deposition coating.

13(Canceled).

14(Previously Amended). A piston ring, according to claim 1 wherein said sharp-edged contact surface edge is provided between said contact surface and said lower side surface.

15(Currently Amended). A method a vapor deposition coating on a contact surface of a piston ring, provided with a contact surface profile, including supplying a base member with a contact

surface profile with a cover outside of the contact surface profile; applying the vapor deposition coating on the contact surface and subsequently removing the cover, so that following the removal of the cover an essentially sharp-edged contact surface edge is formed between the contact surface and at least one of the side surfaces of the base member without disturbing the surface of the vapor deposition coating.

16(Previously Amended). A method, according to claim 15 wherein the vapor deposition coating is formed by a PVD or CVD process.

17(Previously Amended). A method, according to claim 15 wherein the base member in the area of at least one of the side surfaces is supplied with a galvanized layer.

18(Previously Amended). A method, according to claim wherein the vapor deposition coating is created based on Cr and N, in a layer thickness between 5 and 70 μm .

19(Previously Amended). A method, according to claims 15 including forming porous transitional areas by the application of the vapor deposition layer.

20(Previously Amended). A method, according to claim 15 including forming, under cuts for the creation of a oil-retaining reservoirs.